July 20, 2005
Tracking and Monitoring Council Meeting Minutes
CalEPA Building, Sacramento

Introduction: Sam Ziegler, USEPA-Region 9, California Nonpoint Source Program Manager.

The Nonpoint Source Tracking and Monitoring Council (TMC) is patterned after the National Water Quality Monitoring Council (http://water.usgs.gov/wicp/acwi/monitoring/). The TMC has developed a charter and objectives (attachment) that focus on NPS issues, while supporting comprehensive monitoring. A main objective of the Council is to enhance coordination and cooperation between a wide range of organizations in order to improve monitoring and assessment.

Statewide Strategy for Water Quality Monitoring: Presentation by Val Connor, SWRCB Monitoring and Implementation Unit Chief.

The Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP) is in the process of developing a statewide strategy for water quality monitoring. SWAMP was created to fulfill the mandate of the Senate Bill (SB) 982. SB982 required the State Water Resource Control Board (SWRCB) to develop a comprehensive state program for surface waters of all water bodies, to assess impacts of beneficial uses and address all the Clean Water Act and Water Code responsibilities.

The development of a national and state monitoring requires that State create a framework for collaboration and comparability among programs. The core principle for the SWAMP strategy is data comparability and data accessibility through the development of tools (eg., standardized field methods, lab analysis performance criteria, QAPP, database and training templates). The tools are provided through SWAMP and used by other monitoring programs. Incorporating data from other resource is important to develop and analyze data relationships. The NPS-TMC's goal is to integrate the various levels of data to analyze water quality. When considering water quality, it is important to think of it in broader terms, such as watershed health. The most important component to addressing watershed health is developing indictors to assess. SWAMP focuses primarily at what is the water quality, but uses different indicators for assessment such as measurements of channelization and plant growth on stream or watershed health. In that regards to developing indicators, SWAMP has created a bioassessment group that developed difference levels of biological analyses. In linking water quality to watershed assessment, California is trying to come up with a list of watershed indicators that can be presented to the public. One of the difficult issues is transcending scales, because there are different drivers for different groups. It is important to continue the dialog between the NPS TMC Council and the California Ocean Protection Conservancy (OPC). Monitoring is defined differently among groups, therefore it may be important to invite a representative from the OPC clarify what is meant by "monitoring."

Comment and suggestion from the group:

- SWAMP needs to look at some larger scale that puts the water quality parameter in perspective to the health of a watershed (e.g., hydrology of watershed and presence of endangered species. The two ways to approach this idea is: (1) have indicators for these in SWAMP, or (2) have other groups develop the indicators.
- Watershed indicators should be included in CEDEN, not SWAMP. However, this would be difficult to implement because SWAMP is water quality driven by the SWRCB/RWQCB's priorities. SWAMP does address a lot of water quality assessment indicators such as habitat restoration and etc., so it is more inclusive.

- The State need to address problems on a regional scale, therefore the NPS TMC should be involved to develop common question or indicators. We need to determine who will pull this information together and identify the scale of the effort. Participants should put together a list of needs that we would like to see SWAMP accomplish.

California Environmental Data Exchange Network, presentation by Karl Jacob, DWR

The California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN) provides a data management system called the Bay/Delta and Tributaries Database Project (BDAT). This database requires coordination/cooperation between agencies and stakeholders, in order import and export data. The system provides access to a multitude of monitoring program data from many individuals. Some of the other tools that the system provides are data for predictive tools such as models, data for project operations, data for adaptive management a system to distribute GIS and model output and data on mitigation devices (fish screen/barriers etc.). The system also includes a local database component that provides local management and control of the data. The system provides a data-entry utility so data can be entered into the PC and comprehensive database, a PC database for the group who collects the data and infrastructure for transferring data from the data provider to the comprehensive database.

Comment and Suggestion of the group

- The local system is set up to allow them to generate reports and analyses for presentations. The Department of Water Resources provides training for using the system (e.g., training is part of the RWQCB-5 Ag waiver program. There is training for using the tools available in the CEDEN to local groups on how to use the interface. AB 1747 requires training for data input, the reality is that SWRCB/RWQCBs focus on QA/QC and over 600 projects will need to be inputted – that is a potential issue. Of the 600 projects, the projects should be prioritized and methods need to be established on how to get the information.
- Department of Financial Assistance (DFA) requires information to be put into a format that can be used for input into what database will be eventually used.
- State Water Project (SWP) and California Bay Delta Authority (CBDA) have funded this effort.
- All grant recipients need to catalog information into the CERES database (not actual data).
- The scale of involvement in the data management system is mostly State agencies, but watershed groups will increasingly use it in the future. All project are included in the system, not just bond funded projects
- This system lends itself to data local libraries.
- Thought should be given to what the data input is for and also the data should be noted is for 'ambient water quality data."
- Approval for a Feasibility Study Report (FSR) for California Integrated Water Quality System) (CIWQS) that leverages and integrates all the SWRCB and RWQCBs' data needs.
- There should be a link on CEDEN as to what monitoring is being done and where and how it fits in our proposal for the San Joaquin Network.

Updates

SB 1070 – presented by Dave Paradies, Morro Bay Foundation

- SB 1070 is proposed legislation to establish a State Monitoring Council. The effort was initiated through the AB 982 (Public Advisory Group) with respect to data integrity and compatibility. The California Resources Agency and California, Environmental Protection Agency would require to a development of MOU. SB 1070 is designated as a two-year bill and that is currently part way through state legislation.

Monitoring and Project Performance Workshop, Mike Connor – SFEI

- A program performance (PAEP) and a monitoring design workshop will be held at the NPS Conference on

CURES, Perry Clausen

- There is a quarterly newsletter posted on the CURES website. The newsletter is supported by the Almond Board.

UC/SF Bay Estuary, Anitra Pawley

- There is a Coastal watershed assessment on Golden Gate Park.

Agricultural Water Quality Monitoring, Management Measure Tracking and Data Management in the Central Coast Region – Karen Worcester, CCRWQCB

The Central Coast Region is managing data being delivered through the new agricultural waiver program. The data management system has two main components. The first component is for handling management practice data required as part of the Notice of Intent and annual reports for the program. Growers submit information on the location of their ranch (Township-Section-Range), Operator Identification Number (as per DPR Pesticide Use requirement), contact information, crop type, irrigation type, and discharge type. They also indicate whether practices are in place, planned in the next three years or not applicable, and how many acres of land are addressed by management practices. This latter information is reported at a broad category level of erosion control, irrigation management, pesticide management and nutrient management. Demonstrations of the management practice tracking tools and the maps that have been generated from the data can be viewed at http://www.ccamp.org/ca3/California.htm.

Dave Paradies has developed a unique water quality data delivery tool that checks files for correct formatting and automatically feeds information back to the submitter. The tool assists in checking for SWAMP compatibility by comparing data to required SWAMP language and target reporting limits. This will allow consultants and other users to very quickly get feedback on formatting, missing data, required information, etc. without waiting for staff turnaround time. The system is currently being tested in an interactive mode with the contractors for the Cooperative Monitoring Program for agriculture. Central Coast staff anticipate, however, that it will be adapted more broadly for use by their timber waiver program participants, for grant recipients who are collecting data, and volunteer monitors who wish to submit data for use by agency staff. The system has been structured to allow data to be readily imported into Region 3's format for web site development, as well as into the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program's database and the EDF format being used for CIWQS. Data delivery formats and validation files can be viewed at http://www.ccamp.org/ca3/California.htm. The Central Coast Region's data can be viewed at http://www.ccamp.org/ca0/3/3.htm.

Comments and suggestions from the group:

- The database was built for free from Dave Paradies and it is populated through existing EXCEL or ASCI files.
- It is possible to used this for the RWQCB-5 agriculture waiver program.
- The CCRWQCB will start using tend data analysis for Pajaro River in their rotation of watershed efforts and Morro Bay watershed has also shown tend analysis.
- The database has to capability to of importing data from such sources as STORET.
- The CCRWQCB motivates farmers through a lot of upfront work with stakeholders to generate reasonable approval.

Indicator Development: Bio-Assessment presentation by Terry Fleming, U.S. EPA

California Monitoring Assessment Program (CMAP) is designed to address the water quality in perennial wadeable streams in California. The main goal of CMAP is to develop indicators for the State. The indicator used in CMAP is biological integrity through bioassessment. The main nonpoint source question that it is designed to address is; water is the quality of the water in California, is water quality getting better or worse, and to what extent of impairment is associated with nonpoint source. Through the evaluation of historical EMAP data, the following products have be developed to address the NPS question; (1) Southern Coast report using the SC-IBI (available in draft), and (2) Northern California using the NC-IBI (draft). In progress is the statewide report using RIVPACs predictive model and the breakdown of sites by NPS categories. The collection and evaluation of CMAP data started in 2004 and will end in 2009. The process will continue as follows; trends in statewide conditions will be conducted annually, associations with stressors and land use is on-going, and the status of condition by land use will be completed in 2010.

Comments and Suggestions from the group:

- It is difficult to link probabilistic design to other monitoring programs and samples are taken in areas that are stratified by sited availability, which produces bias in the assessment. This also limits the ability to address land use categories. Is the probabilistic method the best way to do this assessment? It was proposed that the design should consist of selecting 10 watersheds randomly and 5 samples in each watershed (one site would be at the mouth of the watershed).
- Changing the design at this point could possible nullify the previous results, because it consists of changing the structure.

Wrap-UP/Next Step

- Sam Ziegler to send email to get feedback on meeting and solicit potential collaboration prrijects/participant needs and potential topics for the next TMC meeting. Next meeting Sept/Oct 2005
- Agenda Items Suggestions
    - Ocean Protection Council
    - Water Quality Assessment Report as per CWA Section 305(b)